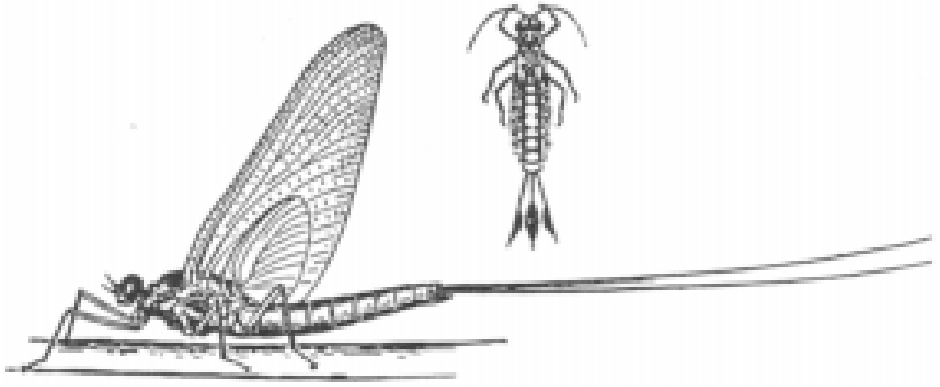
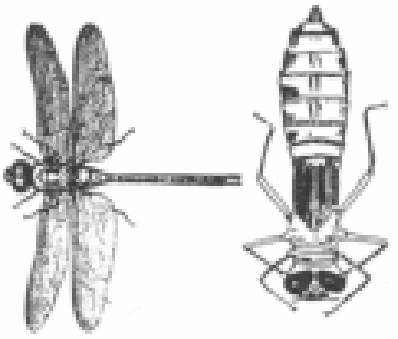
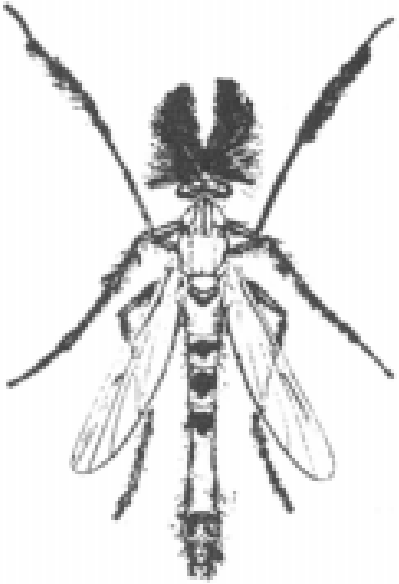


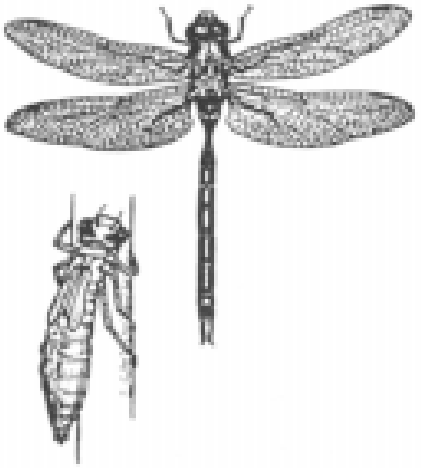
Spring Mayfly and Nymph



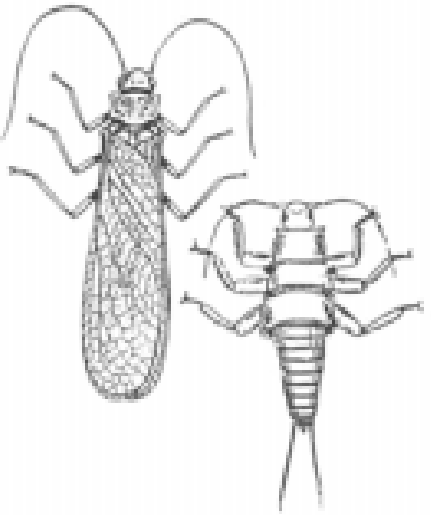
Green Darner and Nymph

These Insects Are 'Bread and Butter'



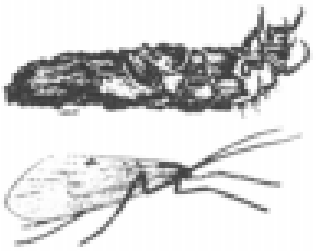


Blue Darner Dragonfly and Nymph

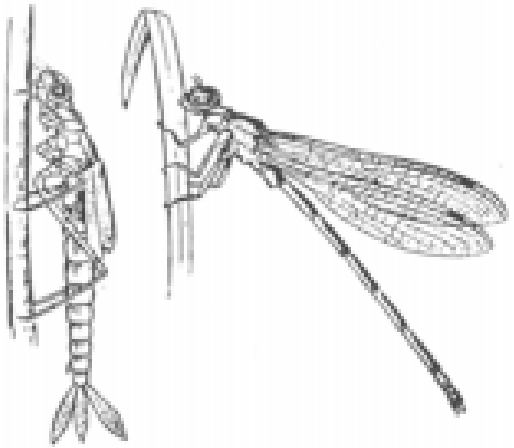


Late Spring Stonefly and Nymph

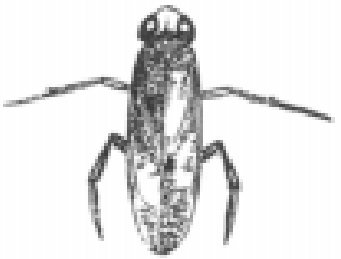
Midge and Larva



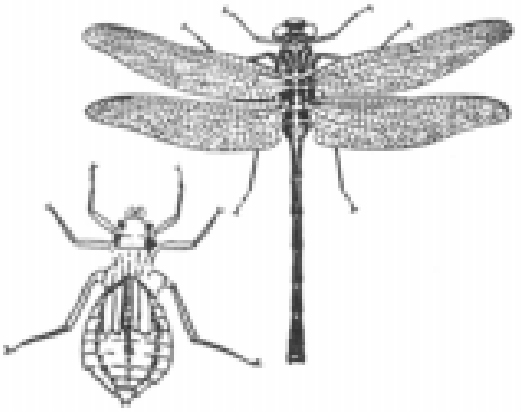
Caddis-Worm in Its Case and the Caddisfly



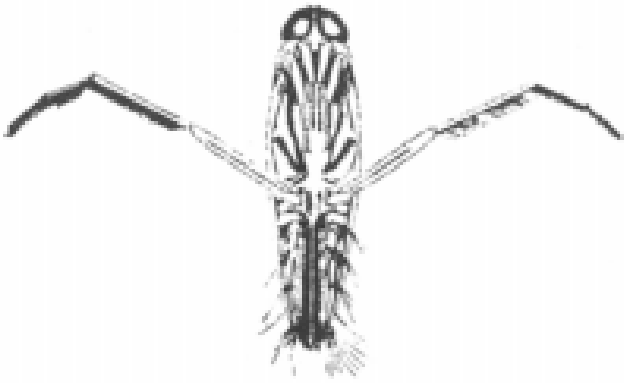
Chromagrion Damselfly and Nymph



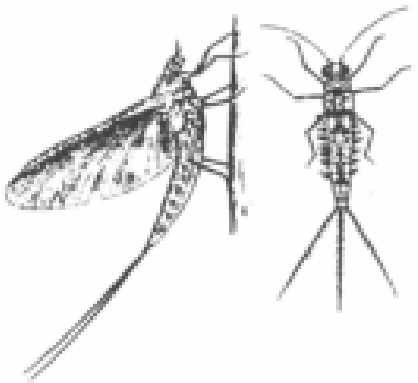
Water Boatman



Black Dragon and Nymph

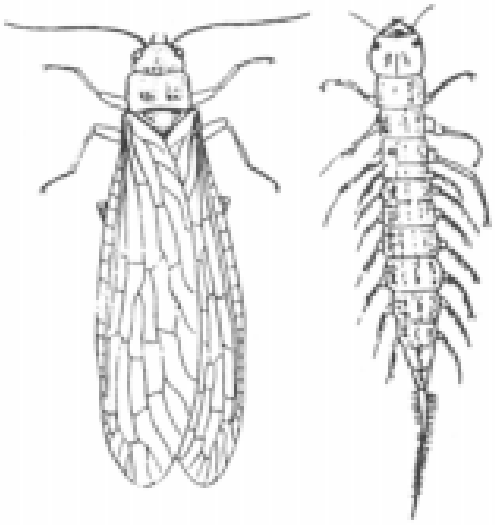


Backswimmer

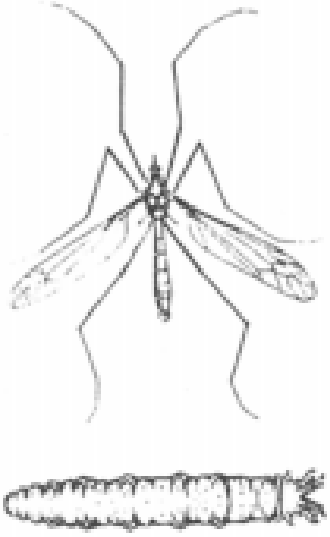


Pale Green Mayfly and Nymph

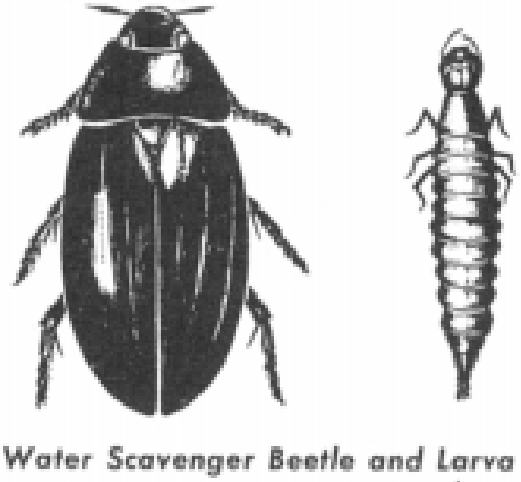
in the Diet of California's Trout



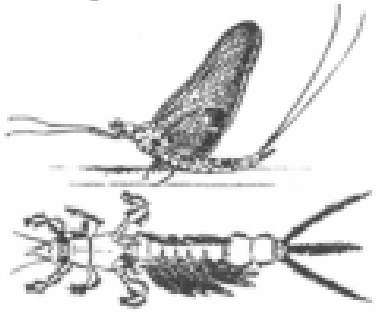
Alderfly and Larva
(Hellgrammite)



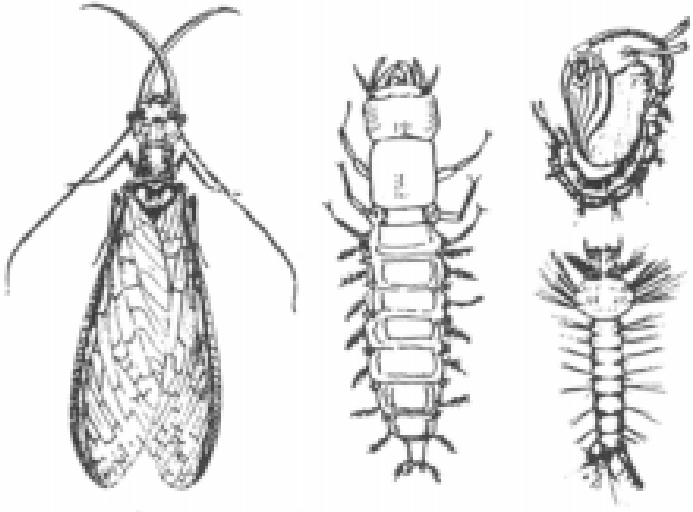
Crane Fly and Larva



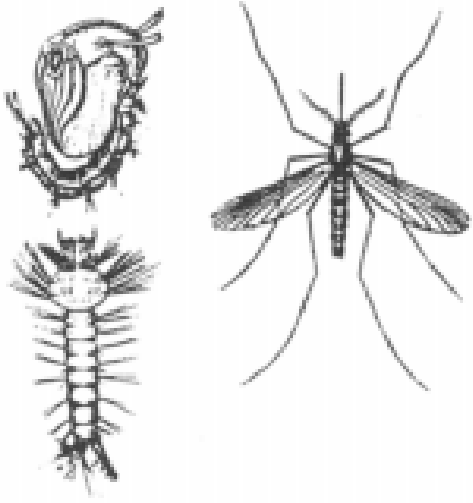
Water Scavenger Beetle and Larva



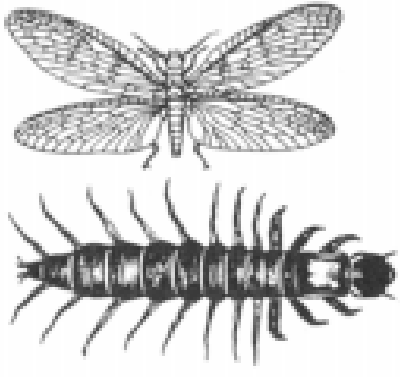
Eel Fly and Nymph



Dobsonfly and Larva
(Hellgrammite)



Mosquito and Its Larva and Pupa



Fishfly and Larva

The fingerling. Now that the young trout is on its own and can no longer depend upon yolk for food, it becomes known as a "fingerling" and this is the name applied until it is a year old when, quite naturally, it is called a yearling. Trout, both small and large, eat a great variety of foods. Now and then, bits of plant material can be found in their stomachs, but ordinarily they are carnivorous. Insects of one kind or another are the preferred foods after the fish are large enough to eat them. The larger brown trout, the mackinaw, and the steelhead in the ocean may feed to a large extent on other fish. But there are so many exceptions that it is unwise to generalize. Some very large trout feed almost entirely on the minute forms of plankton. On the other hand, a fingerling trout can often be found with a smaller fingerling in its mouth. It is quite correct to say that trout will eat almost anything, but insects are the "bread and butter" of their diet.

As the young trout eats, it grows; but the speed of its growth may vary from three inches or 'less to over a foot a year. It is difficult to tell how old a trout is by its size, because there are many factors which influence the rate of growth. The amount a trout eats can vary widely and depends largely upon the amount of food available, the temperature of the water, and the size of the body of water it is living in. As an example, a "resident" rainbow which spends all its life in a small pool in a cold, mountain brook will not eat as much food in an entire year as its steelhead cousin may eat in a week. Naturally, its growth will be very slow. It may be 3½ inches long by the end of its first year and perhaps only five inches long by the time it is two years old. Its cousin, who has gone to the ocean at about the end of its first year, may grow to be 16 inches long and reach a weight of 1½ pounds in the time it has taken the stream rainbow to grow to five inches. In some rich lakes, such as Lake Almanor in Plumas County, a rainbow planted as a two-inch fingerling one summer may be 14 inches long a year later. There are a few large lakes in the world in which rainbow reach a weight of 16 pounds in four years. In many cases where growth is very rapid we find the trout eating smaller fish almost exclusively and the water temperature remaining somewhere in the neighborhood of 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. In colder water the appetite of trout diminishes.

The adult. Fish, unlike birds and mammals, never entirely stop growing. Most trout die from one cause or another long before they reach their maximum life span and only the exceptional fish will attain a large size.

Young rainbow, brown, and eastern brook trout. Note differences in marking and compare these illustrations of young trout with drawings of older specimens.

Rainbow Trout—4½ inches long

Brown Trout—4½ inches long

Eastern Brook Trout—3¾ inches long